

Using HEInnovate to Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Universities of Applied Sciences

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This Skills CoP session focuses on the role of entrepreneurship and innovation in UASs' contribution to regional development and societal impact. It will start with a quick introduction from the CoP co-leaders to place the discussion in the broader context of the Union of Skills.

Our external guests will then present how HEInnovate can be used as a practical framework to help institutions strengthen ecosystem engagement, reflect on their impact, and identify areas for change.

Session background

Responding directly to the EURASHE 2026 theme of demand-driven research and innovation, the session positions HEInnovate as a practical framework for institutions seeking to strengthen their role as drivers of regional development and competitiveness.

HEInnovate is a transformation framework developed by the European Commission and the OECD to support higher education institutions in strengthening their innovation and entrepreneurship capacity across eight interrelated dimensions (Figure 1). Rather than serving as a benchmarking tool, HEInnovate is explicitly designed to foster structured dialogue, shared understanding, and collective ownership of institutional change. The session will focus on two interconnected HEInnovate dimensions that directly address the conference theme. The Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Networks dimension examines how institutions proactively engage with public authorities, businesses, incubators, science parks, and civil society to generate regional impact. The Impact of the Entrepreneurial Higher Education Institution dimension focuses on measuring and demonstrating the concrete outcomes of institutional activities, including contributions to economic development, talent retention, and societal challenges.

The workshop introduces a peer-learning exchange where participants identify transferable practices from other institutions' strengths to address their own gaps. Selected HEInnovate Action Cards will serve as prompts to help participants translate reflections into feasible institutional actions.

The workshop will allow participants to experience HEInnovate not only as a diagnostic framework but as a facilitation method they can replicate within their own institutions.

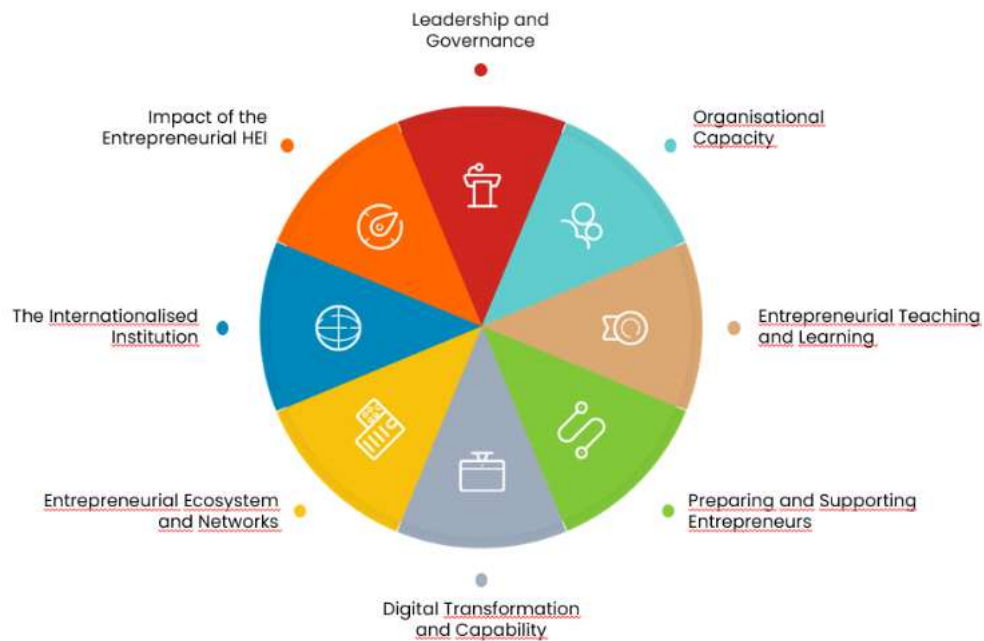


FIGURE 1. THE HEINNOVATE DIMENSIONS